

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS REFLECTION – 2

In my last week's reflection on Domestic Violence Awareness (DVA), I tried to explain the meaning of Domestic violence (DV), the types, and the causes of DV. So, we do know by now, DV is all about Power and Control that the perpetrator uses against his/her victim. We also know that no one is born with it. Unfortunately, it is a learned behavior. It is NOT cause by mental health, anger, stress, alcohol, or drugs.

In this week's reflection paper, I would like to focus on some red flags/signs, adverse effects, and how to prevent Domestic Violence in our community.

Some Red Flags/Signs to look for:

Be careful when your husband/fiancé is always monitoring who you are talking with, reading your text messages or emails etc. without your consent. When your partner is extremely possessive of you, this is a red flag you MUST address with him immediately. Do not postpone it until tomorrow.

Also, pay attention to both his verbal and nonverbal communication. For example, does he call you names when he does not get his way? Does he look at you in such a way that it is intimidation? When your partner disregards your wellbeing and all is about himself, it is the red flag of DV.

Another red flag to look for is when he/she criticizes your appearance, weight, clothes, etc. just to humiliate and disrespect you intentionally.

Some Adverse Effects of DV

Some adverse effects of Domestic Violence have been documented to have huge socio-economic and psychological impacts on victims, their families, and the community. Victims suffer emotional, psychological, and socio-economic trauma that may ruin his/her whole life.

Prevention of DV

Prevention of DV is a duty for everyone. It is not just for domestic violence prevention professionals or certain groups of professionals. It is our collective duty to make sure everyone is safe and lives a purposeful life God has created him/her for. Through our spiritual and financial assistance to organizations that are fighting to prevent domestic violence, we are creating a safe haven for all God's children.

In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) condemned domestic violence in very strong words: "Violence against women, inside or outside the home, is never justified. Violence in any form--physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal is sinful; often it is a crime as well." (cf. When I call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women, 2002). They also came up with Safe Environment programs to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse.

Here are some ways we can all help to prevent DV:

Learn to listen carefully and believe the story of victims of domestic violence

Refer victims of DV to counseling and other professional services available for DV victims.

Victims of DV must be proactive. They must know that they are not alone and that there is assistance out there. It is NOT okay to suffer DV. You are a precious and a loving child of God. You are not responsible for the misbehavior of your perpetrator.

Do not accept an apology or gift from your partner after he abused you. His apology or gift is meant to keep you in his continued cycle of abuse of you. Remember, you are more precious than his gift.

To conclude, I would like again to salute all those great men and women who are helping to prevent domestic violence. I also thank God for those who give spiritual and financial assistance to these organizations fighting to end DV. I continue to pray every day for the healing of victims of DV, and for those who have died because of domestic violence. May the good and loving God grant them eternal rest and let his perpetual light shine upon them.

Some Resources:

The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1800-799-7233

Catholic Church response: www.USCCB.org/Topics?Marriage-and-family-life-ministries/domestic-violence

USCCB Pastoral Statement: When I call for Help (2002)

Women's Aid in Crisis, 304- 473-0070

Call 911

As always, you may reach out to me with clarifications or questions regarding this reflection paper.

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